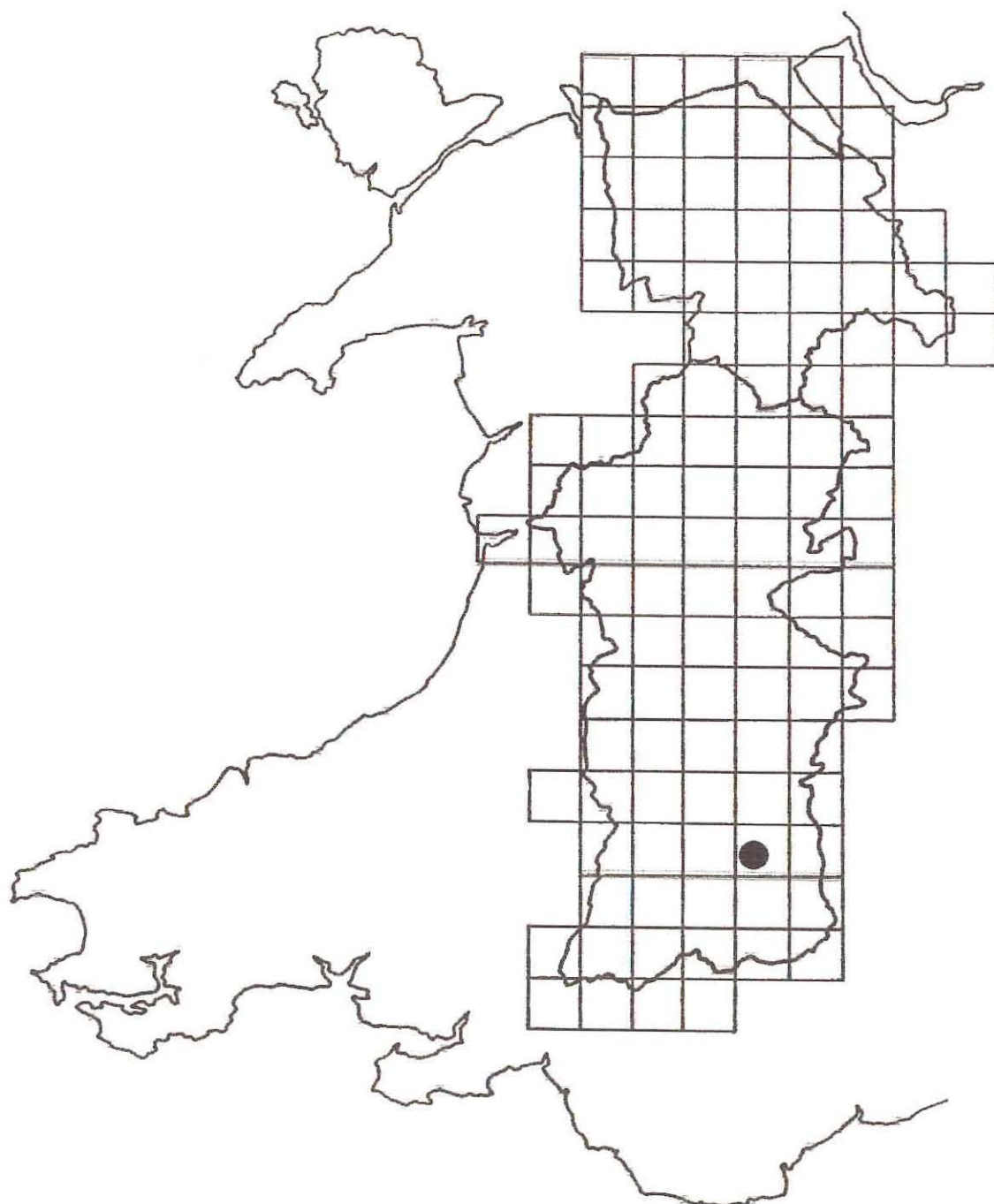


Tycanol, Llanfilo, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



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by D Thomas

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Report prepared for Felinnewydd Estate

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SUMMARY

An evaluation was undertaken at Tycanol in the village of Llanfilo by CPAT Contracting for Edwin Thompson and Company, of Keswick, Cumbria, acting on behalf of the Felinnewydd Estate. The evaluation was requested by Brecknock Borough Council in response to a proposed housing development (B7175) to test whether archaeological deposits were present on the site, especially along the street frontage. Three trenches were excavated, but apart from a short section of wall nothing of archaeological significance was revealed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPAT Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
EVB Evaluation Brief
PAR Powys Archaeological Number
SAM Scheduled Ancient Monument
OD Ordnance Datum
OS Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CPAT Contracting was commissioned in November 1994 by Edwin Thompson and Company, of Keswick, Cumbria, acting on behalf of the Felinnewydd Estate Trust to undertake a pre-planning archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed housing development on a portion of land known as Tycanol in the village of Llanfilo in Powys (S0119334) (Fig 1). The evaluation was requested in response to an outline planning application (B7175) by Brecknock Borough Council on the advice of the curatorial section of CPAT acting in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the council.

1.2 A brief for the archaeological evaluation was prepared by the curatorial section of CPAT on behalf of the Felinnewydd Estate Trust. It recognised the archaeological sensitivity of the site and specified that the evaluation should consist of three evaluation trenches (CPAT EVB 109). A written specification for the work was subsequently prepared by CPAT Contracting and submitted to the client for approval (see Appendix 1). The specification was accepted and excavations commenced on December 7th 1994 and were completed in 3 days. This report was prepared immediately afterwards.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY, AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site contains the derelict remains of Tycanol Farm and lies on the western side of the main North to South axial street. It is c140m to the north-west of St Bilo's church (PAR 20183) and c180m north of a scheduled moated site (PAR 4494, SAM B195).

2.2 The development site lies on north facing ground which drops from 195.6m OD at the southern end to 185.3m OD at the northern end. The site is generally 0.6m above the present surface of the adjacent road.

2.3 The solid geology of the area is characterised by Old Red Sandstone, which outcrops towards the centre of the site, overlain by glacial till which supports well drained loamy soils (Mackney et al. 1983 and Neville George, 1970).

2.4 No sites have been the subject of previous archaeological excavations in Llanfilo. It has however been the subject of research as part of the Brecknock Borough Historical settlements project (Martin and Walters, 1993, p82-4) which suggests that the village is likely to have its origin in the early medieval period. This is indicated by both the sub-circular churchyard and the British dedication of the church to St Bilo, a local saint and daughter of Brychan. The church itself was extensively restored in 1913 and so much of its early fabric has been lost, but it contains a rood screen dating to around 1500 and the Angelis Bell which has a supposed date of between 1380 and 1400 and is thought to be the oldest bell in the county. The substantial remains of the moated site (PAR 4494) are of probable medieval date and may represent the former manor site. The development site lies within the supposed historic core of the village

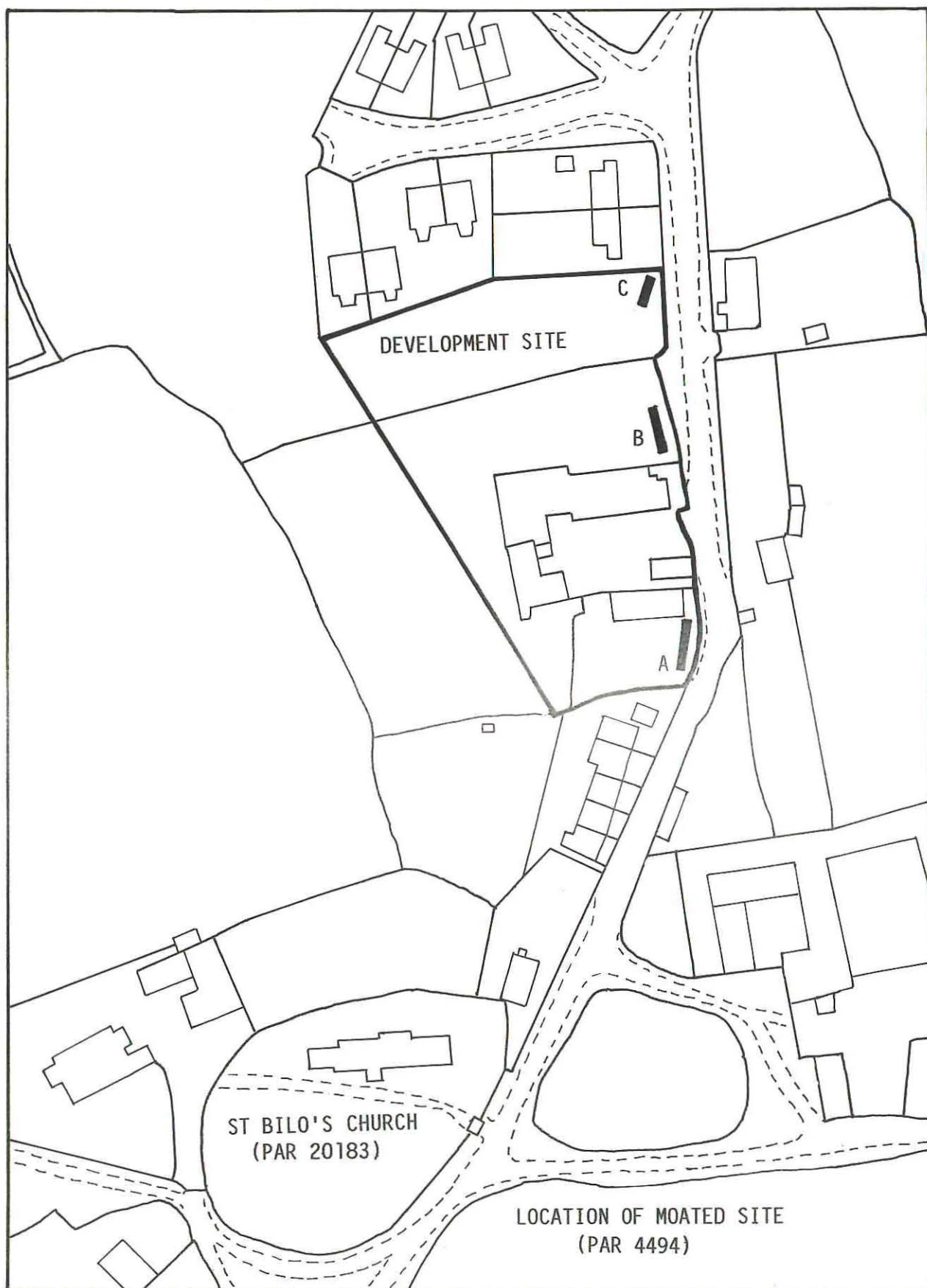


Fig 1. Location Plan of Evaluation Site and location of Trenches (1:1250).

3 EXCAVATIONS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The three evaluation trenches, two measuring 10m x 2m and one measuring 7m x 2m, were positioned to assess the nature of the archaeology across the site as a whole, but in particular along the street frontage where early activity was most likely to be present.

3.1.2 Excavations were carried out between the 7th and 9th of December 1994 with a staff varying between two and four. The site was monitored by Mr Mark Walters of the curatorial section of CPAT on the 9th of December.

3.1.3 Modern topsoil and overburden were removed by machine after which work was continued by hand to assess the nature, preservation and date of the surviving archaeological deposits. Recording was undertaken using standard archaeological methods, as outlined in the specification (Appendix 1). Numbers in brackets in the following descriptions refer to context numbers recorded on site.

3.1.4 All height readings in the report are related to the OS datum using two temporary benchmarks, one sited on the eastern side of the road close to Pen Darren, and the other sited on the a field boundary towards the northern end of the site. The temporary benchmarks were established using the permanent benchmark sited on the northern corner of the building opposite Noddfa.

3.2 Trench A

3.2.1 Topsoil (01) varying between 0.3m and 0.6m deep was machined off an area approximately 10m x 2m where the present ground surface sloped from 195.54m OD at the south to 194.16m OD at the north. This revealed the natural reddish-brown clay-loam hillwash (02) and, along the western side of the trench, the red sandstone bedrock (03). Several post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the dark brown topsoil which probably represents garden soil adjacent to the abandoned farmhouse.

3.2.2 A low wall (04) running from north-east to south-west was revealed towards the southern end of the site (FIG 2). This consisted of a single layer of undressed and unbonded red sandstone blocks. The western end of the revealed part of the wall lay directly on the bedrock (03), while to the east it lay directly on the natural subsoil (02). To the south-east of the wall was a small area of rough cobbling (05) measuring approximately 0.3m x 0.7m which contained post-medieval pottery. The alignment of the wall does not reflect that of either the adjacent road or the existing buildings on the site and its purpose could not be determined. No other features were present within the trench.

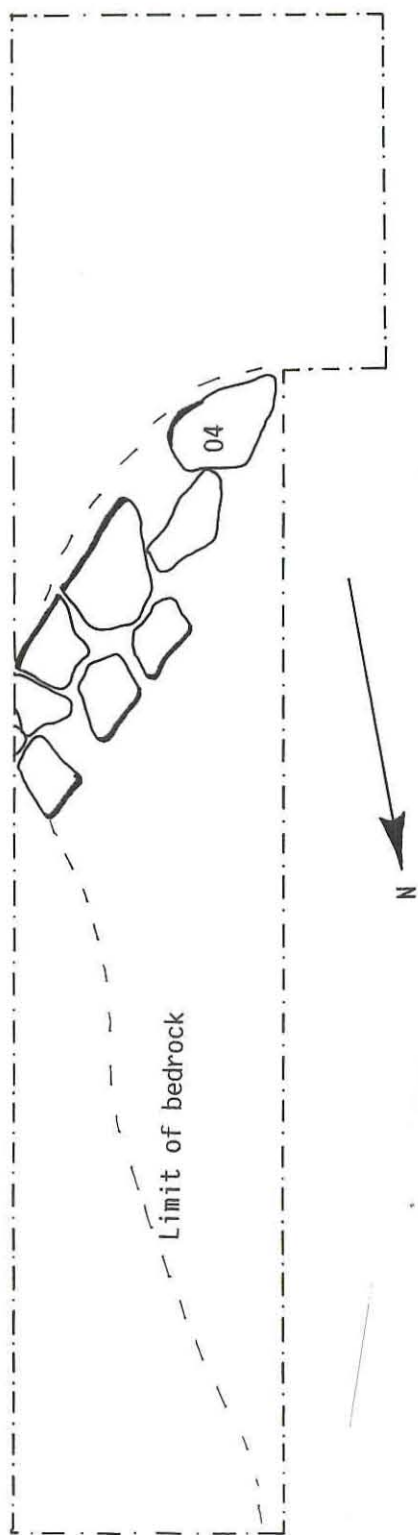


Fig 2 Plan of Trench A (1:50)

3.3 Trench B

3.3.1 Topsoil (01) varying between 0.22m and 0.45m deep was machined off an area measuring approximately 10m x 2m where the present ground surface sloped from 189.10m OD at the southern end to 187.83m OD at the northern end. This revealed the natural reddish brown clay-loam hillwash (02) and, along the western side of the trench, the red sandstone bedrock (03). Occasional sherds of modern pottery and glass were recovered from the topsoil. No structures or features were encountered within the trench.

3.4 Trench C

3.3.1 Topsoil (01) varying between 0.22m and 0.34m deep was machined off an area approximately 8m x 2m where the present ground surface sloped from 185.98m OD at the southern end to 185.15m OD at the northern end. This revealed the natural reddish brown clay-loam hillwash (02). Occasional sherds of modern pottery and glass were recovered from the topsoil layer. No structures or features were encountered within the trench. The hillwash layer was excavated to a depth of 0.3m at the northern end of the trench partly for further investigation and partly to act as a sump to collect the excess water which ran into the trench. The hillwash layer (02) was free of any archaeological material, and was therefore confirmed as natural.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Apart from the low wall (04) encountered within Trench A little of any archaeological significance was revealed during the evaluation. This may be because recent activity such as ploughing or gardening has removed any traces of earlier activity. Alternately it is possible that this portion of land had always been devoid of development.

4.2 The development site contains c90m of street frontage, 28m of which was sampled. This makes it possible that street frontage archaeology exists in the 62m not sampled on the development, but it is unlikely.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPAT wishes to thank Mr Jeff McMaster of Edwin Thompson and Co for his assistance during the evaluation, and to Mr Bowen of Llyswen for his work in removing the topsoil. My own thanks go to Mr Richard Hankinson, Mr Brian Hart and Mr Glyn Owen of CPAT for their assistance during the excavations, and again to Mr Richard Hankinson for his search of the map archive material.

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APPENDIX 1

LAND AT TY CANOL, LLANFILO, near BRECON, POWYS

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

1.1 A proposed residential housing development (Brecknock Borough Council Planning Application B7175) on land near the centre of Llanfילו, lies within what is believed to be the historic core of the village in an area of what is considered to be of extreme archaeological sensitivity. A church was probably established here in the early medieval period and a short distance to the south is a significant moated site, recently scheduled as a site of national importance. Consequently, it has been pointed out that archaeological remains may exist in the area of the proposed development.

1.2 Brecknock Borough Council have decided on the advice of their archaeological advisers, the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) that an evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the planning application on the archaeological resource in order that these can be taken into account during the determination of that planning. Accordingly a brief (CPAT EVB 109) has been prepared by the Curatorial Section of CPAT on behalf of the Brecon Beacons National Park which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:

2.1.1 to reveal by means of three carefully located excavation trenches, the nature, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these are possible;

2.1.2 to record any archaeology so revealed;

2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for the planning authority to assess the implications of the development.

3 Methods

3.1 The evaluation will take the form of three linear trenches, each 10m x 2m, as specified in the evaluation brief. The trenches will have the topsoil and any modern overburden removed mechanically, with this phase of the work being supervised closely by the archaeological team

leader. This will be followed by manual excavation of all areas deemed to be of potential archaeological significance within the trench. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.

3.2 The excavation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:

3.2.1 removal of modern overburden and sterile lower levels

3.2.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits.

3.2.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Evaluation Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.

3.2.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to an appropriate museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.

3.3 Following the on-site work a report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Evaluation Brief.

3.4 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited in the Powys County Sites and Monuments Record.

4 Resources and Programming

4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by the Deputy Director of CPAT who is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who supervised the evaluation.

4.3 It is anticipated that the evaluation will take up to five days and the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter and submitted to the client within 15 working days of the completion of the fieldwork. This will be dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client.

4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be

adhered to by CPAT and its staff.

4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

R. J. Silvester

1 November 1994

APPENDIX 2

ARCHIVE AND FINDS

ARCHIVE

Plans and section

Location plan of trenches at 1:1250. Feature plans and section drawings of all trenches at 1:20. The archive is stored at the CPAT offices.

Photographic Archive

35mm colour transparencies of excavated trenches and features.

35mm black and white negatives and contact print of trenches and all excavated features.

Catalogue of all black and white photographs.

Context Records

Record forms describing all recorded contexts.

FINDS

The only finds recovered during the evaluation were modern finds of pottery and glass from the topsoil. These finds were not retained.